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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EB/MST/NISSEN  
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TAGS: [ETRD](#) [NL](#) [UNCTAD](#) [WTRO](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: UNCTAD XI: NETHERLANDS POSITION

REF: STATE 51412

1. (SBU) The Ministry of Economic Affairs responded to demarche requested ref a by noting that the Netherlands attaches considerable importance to UNCTAD XI and hopes that it will exert a positive influence on the Doha Round negotiations. Although the Dutch do not want UNCTAD XI to interfere in matters that are under direct negotiation in the Doha Round, they believe that the conference must address major trade issues affecting developing countries. In this regard, they believe UNCTAD can play a positive role in

- a) developing further the "Singapore Issues" (mainly investment and competition);
- b) promoting the importance of South-South trade;
- c) preparing countries for the effects of the erosion of trade preferences as the WTO establishes a true level playing field.

2. (SBU) MEA indicated that in EU 133 Committee meetings, the European Commission (which has competence in the European Union over trade issues) has expressed the view that UNCTAD XI should not be used to disrupt the Doha process or to alter the WTO negotiating agenda. UNCTAD XI should be instead used to set UNCTAD's work program for the coming years, taking as a starting point that UNCTAD should do what it is best placed to do -- analysis, assistance, and advocacy. That implies promoting a prominent role for trade in international and regional policy in and between developing countries, promoting integration between developing countries, and helping developing countries in becoming less dependent on trade in commodities.

3. (SBU) For the first half of the UNCTAD conference (June 13-15), the Dutch delegation will be led by Development Cooperation Minister van Ardennes. Van Ardennes was a member of the Dutch delegation at Cancun and frequently interprets her role as ensuring that developing country interests are taken into account. On March 16, Van Ardennes will depart and be Economic Affairs Minister Brinkhorst will take over as Dutch Head of Delegation. Brinkhorst was a WTO Vice Chairman and Head of the Dutch delegation in Cancun. Brinkhorst is a staunch advocate of open trade and investment markets and of the multilateral trading system. Other Economics Ministry members on the Dutch delegation will be Wim van der Leeuw and Ashraf Khan. Van der Leeuw and Khan are long-standing Embassy contacts who can be expected to be sympathetic to U.S. positions. They will likely attend upcoming Geneva prepcoms as ell.

Sobel